

## PROPOSED POLITICAL FEDERATION OF EAST AFRICAN COUNTRIES: "BENEFIT" TO TANZANIA

BY

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“BENEFIT” TO TANZANIA**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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However, some of them ceased to exist or collapsed. The East African Community which was formed by Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda in 1967 is one of them. It collapsed in 1977 due to a number of reasons. After nearly two decades the East African Community was born again; this time expanded to include Burundi and Rwanda and with more ambitious objectives. One of the objectives of the renewed East African Community is to form a political federation for the five member states. This paper seeks to establish the objectives of the proposed political federation and how Tanzania will or will not benefit from the federation.





## PROPOSED POLITICAL FEDERATION OF EAST AFRICAN COUNTRIES: “BENEFIT” TO TANZANIA

Economically, Tanganyika (Tanzania, my emphasis) might have gained from federation, but she has less to gain than Kenya or Uganda and was the most capable of going it alone.

—Joseph Nye<sup>1</sup>

The revival of the East African Community (EAC), with Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania as its founding members is one of the most dramatic developments in Africa in the past decade. Prior to its collapse, the old EAC, which was founded in 1967, was regarded by the international community as one of the most successful regional economic integration treaties without a political structure on the continent. However, the EAC collapsed prematurely in 1977 due to, among other reasons, ideological differences among its member states. On November 30, 1999, twenty two years after its collapse, the community arose again on following systematic and gradual negotiations by the three presidents of the original member countries Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

The new EAC is aimed at widening and deepening co-operation among member states for their mutual benefit with a customs union as the entry point to the community. The establishment of a customs union will be followed by a common market, a monetary union and finally, political federation. Currently, the EAC has five member states after the admission of Burundi and Rwanda into the community in 2006. Nevertheless the member countries have significant historical, cultural, and political dissimilarities. These differences are serious challenges to the realization of EAC goals. This paper seeks to discuss how Tanzania could benefit from the proposed political federation framework within the context of cultural, historical and political diversity.

## History and Background of Regional Co-Operation

In Africa, the establishment of regional integration is not new. Experiments with it occurred across the continent in West, South, and East Africa throughout the colonial period. Economic integration has been its main emphasis. In East Africa, regional integration dates to the time of British colonialism. British colonial interest in east Africa began in the 1890s with a set of motives outlined by Baruti Katembo, a professor at Edward Waters College in Florida, as: 1) securing control of the Nile headwaters as a conduit for protection of British position in Egypt and the Suez canal, 2) monitoring of pre-World War I era German imperial plans in the region, and 3) opening up the Kenyan hinterland via rail transport to introduce lucrative large-scale farming<sup>2</sup>. The purpose was to exploit resources in the region and to protect the source of Nile River against rival imperial powers.

The customs union, as the first formal regional economic integration, between Kenya and Uganda was formed before the conclusion of the World War I, and Tanganyika, a former German colony assigned to Britain under the League of Nations mandate territory assigned to Britain, joined in the late 1920s after becoming part of British East Africa. Britain formed the East African Community as a form of regional integration despite opposition from Ugandan local leaders. In 1948, the British formed the East African High Commission (EAHC) to oversee common services initiatives for the East African region. Such services were harbors, railways, airways, postal and customs union, common currency and the University of East Africa. The EAHC was replaced in 1961 by the East Africa Common Services Organization (EACSO). EACSO was charged with the management of integration services in almost the same they were

managed by EAHC. EAHC was replaced by EACSO as a result of Tanganyika (the now mainland Tanzania) independence on December 9, 1961 from Britain.

The British attempt to integrate the East African region set a foundation, though not an objective, for future integration by the independent East African states. The difference between the two was the basic political motive. Whereas the British integration of the region served the political economy of imperialism, which was exploitative in nature, the objective of future independent East African states was the opposite of this.

The British form of East African regional integration was motivated by capitalism and the search for economic efficiency centered around Kenya<sup>3</sup>. During British colonialism in East Africa Kenya remained at all times the seat of all the integration institutions. Tanzania was of marginal interest to the British colonizers, being regarded as an extension of the colonial economy an East African headquartered in Kenya, Nairobi<sup>4</sup>. The reason for this is Tanzania was a mandatory territory ruled by Britain on behalf of the League of Nations (from 1920s to 1945) and later on behalf of the United Nations (from 1945 to 1961). This incentivized the British to invest more in Kenya than in Tanzania.

### East African Integration: 1960-1963

In June 1960 Julius Nyerere made his famous offer to delay Tanganyika's independence if it would mean that all three East African territories could come to independence together as a federal unit. This speech brought federation to the forefront of East African politics for the first time since the Closer Union Movement of the 1920's.<sup>5</sup> The Closer Union Movement was essentially an imperially (exploitative) motivated federation. The spirit of Pan-Africanism surrounded Africa from 1940s during the period

of the struggle for colonial independence in the early 1960s. Pan-Africanism is an ideology of togetherness or integration. Many African leaders, led by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, advocated for the unification of the African continent after independence. Although Nyerere advocated Pan-Africanism, his approach for African unity was through regional integration. Kwame Nkrumah called for immediate creation of a formal federation of African countries. Momentum for African unity came to its height following the formation of the Organization of African Unity in May 1963.

The East Africa region was not left behind in the spirit of integration. A Tanganyika cabinet minister in 1963 made a statement that “it appears to be the tendency of all the people in the world to try to come together. In the past this has been because of danger. Now common markets are used as a second best form of achieving unity. We must not miss our chance.”<sup>6</sup> East African leaders began working on ways of integrating the three countries, Kenya, Tanganyika, and Uganda. The ruling parties in the three countries were the Kenya African National Union (KANU) in Kenya, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) in Tanganyika, and the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) in Uganda.

On June 5, 1963, the president of Tanganyika and the Prime Ministers of Kenya and Uganda announced their intention of forming a federation by the end of that year.<sup>7</sup> This declaration was in the spirit of Pan-Africanism for the reason that leaders believed in unity which is the primary goal of the movement. The leaders were thus determined to take a practical step by forming an economic and political federation of the East African region that was to be seen as a model in Africa. The leaders believed in a possible unity because of their common ideology. One renowned Kenyan politician

Oginga Odinga said: "The political philosophies of the three ruling parties [in Kenya, Tanganyika, and Uganda] are identical and it is for this reason that, when the time comes, we shall gladly surrender our territorial sovereignty..."<sup>8</sup> This commonality in ideology between the three states was purely a political statement as the situation on the ground was very different.

The envisioned Kenyan, Tanzanian and Ugandan federation was never realized due to numerous factors. One of the reasons for its failure was the lack of interest among stakeholders. The most critical of the East Africa Federation was the Buganda kingdom in Uganda. The Kingdom feared losing its inherited colonial position in Uganda's politics. Also some prominent non-Baganda showed similar reservations, as Nye asserts: "in Uganda, not only were the Baganda hostile to federation because they associated it with a threat to the Kabakaship (kingship), but important non-Baganda...promised to fight against federation."<sup>9</sup> The top leaders in Uganda lost the political will to move ahead and changed their position as far as federation was concerned, probably as a result Buganda pressure and the domestic support they needed from the kingdom.

They stated that Uganda was not ready for federation and went further arguing that the federation was not consistent with the Addis accord which stressed African unity as a whole. The Uganda Peoples Congress parliamentary secretaries argued: "we are committed to the idea of Pan-African unity and we are afraid that our economic interest in federation will clash with our ideological interest in African unity. There will be no federation because it would prevent African unity. We must come together all at once. Federation is too much to expect. We cannot give up that much independence.

African unity will be weaker than federation and we will not object to that.”<sup>10</sup> They also doubted the sincerity of the Pan-African commitment of the Kenyans and Tanzanians. These were some of the many reservations Ugandans had about the federation of the region.

On the part of Tanganyika, there was a time when leaders did not have time to think of federation. This happened when Nyerere resigned his premiership in order to strengthen TANU. Also, domestic economic challenges helped Tanganyika to develop its sense of national interest. The country became concerned with raising the living standards of its people and leaders saw that the emerging political federation was going to challenge this goal.

Kenya's position on federation drew fewer problems because its ideology and interests coincided. The East African federation was in its economic interest because it was the economic hub of the region from the early days of British colonial rule. Nye points out that Kenya had every interest in preserving the East African market. It was her most rapidly growing market and one within which she had nearly three-quarters of the manufacturing industry.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Kenya was the main exporter of labor in the region; therefore, the federation was in its best interest because it could create a large market for its industrial goods, expand the employment opportunities for its people, and give it access to regional resources and capital investment. Finally, many saw federation as a means to promote internal unity in Kenya by diminishing the severity of Kenya's tribalism and regionalism.<sup>12</sup>

Ironically, once the national interests of each party became clearer, Pan-Africanism, originally seen as a unifying factor in and around Africa, contributed to

disunity. In the words of Nye: "Pan-Africanism had several causal roles in the failure of East Africa to federate in 1963. In the background period, from 1958 on, it provided arguments and a sense of direction toward federation....It influenced expectations, which are often more important than preferences- witness Buganda's position. In another role it provided the set of common assumptions which existed during the early meetings on federation in 1963. At later meetings it became a weapon used to defend separate interests."<sup>13</sup> Thus for the federation to have been achieved, it needed each country to sacrifice its national interest to wider regional interests. But this did not happen as national interests developed quickly during 1963.

Ugandan leaders were unwilling to sacrifice their national interests, so they seized upon a new interpretation of Pan -Africanism.<sup>14</sup> This new interpretation of Pan-Africanism was based on Ghana's position of African unity. Leaders of Ghana openly opposed regional groupings or federations for the reason that they were not in the interest of overall unity of African countries. This gave each country an 'exit clause' on federation. Hence, by the end of 1963, each country paid attention to its own national interests and the federation eventually failed. It took almost four years before the three East African states formed another community.

#### East African Community: 1967-1977

In 1967, four years after the failure of the East African federation, the three countries signed a treaty known as the 1967 Treaty. The Treaty acquired the force of law on December 1st 1967, leading to the formation of the East African Community. The EAC established six principal organs: 1) East African Authority, 2) Committee of East African Ministers, 3) Secretariat, 4) East African Legislative Assembly, 5) Ministerial Councils (five), and 6) East African Development Bank<sup>15</sup>. The Community took over

nearly the entire range of joint services institutions belonging to the former East African Common Services Organization (EACSO). These services were in turn categorized into East African Community Corporations which included Railways, Posts and Telecommunications, Airways and Cargo Handling services. It also formed a General Fund Services (GFS) as a regional corporation comprised of research, training, and an Auditor-General's departments.

In terms of structure, the respective Heads of State were at the top of the overall leadership of the Community. They were assisted by a committee of ministers who permanently resided in Arusha, the headquarters of the Community. One fundamental change the 1967 Treaty introduced was the relocation of the headquarters of a number of Community Corporations from Nairobi to Dar es Salaam and Kampala<sup>16</sup>. This decision was seen both as a correction to Britain's Kenya-centric model and as a step to quell colonial era resentment against Kenya from Tanzania and Uganda.

A long-term goal of the EAC was to establish an East African common market in order to promote, strengthen, and regulate common industrial and commercial developments. The economic benefits of cooperative and regulated development and trade were to be equally shared by the three member states. It was observed that "the 1967 Treaty was a forward-looking, comprehensive and courageous document of political wisdom and statesmanlike vision. It demonstrated the benefits and advantages of cooperation and integration in East Africa."<sup>17</sup> However, in barely a few years into its existence the Community started to face serious problems leading to its eventual demise in 1977.



## The Collapse of EAC

According to Katembo, the East African Community (1967-1977) crumbled from the administrative failure of its leadership to resolve the collective impact of six major, on-going issues: 1) lack of political will to completely federate 2) insufficient information distribution and confederation concept buy-in amongst tri-state rank and file citizenry, 3) inequitable fiscal distribution of gains, 4) inter-territorial imbalances in trade, 5) currency system disharmony, and 6) constitutional impediments.<sup>18</sup> The factors for the collapse of EAC can be summarized into three categories political, economic and institutional.

Politically, the three states were pursuing divergent paths with the resulting tensions immeasurably intensified by the assumption of power in Uganda of Idi Amin Dada. The tensions affected trade within the region and also led to the decline of foreign investment. Moreover, the East African Authority which was the supreme body was not able to meet anymore from 1971 when Amin seized power in Uganda. Personality relationships had also accounted for the decline of the EAC for example, presidents of Tanzania and Uganda could not sit together since Tanzania denounced the coup in Uganda that brought to power Idi Amin

Economically, forces of economic nationalism took over. Each of the member states effectively withdrew from the common currency, each introducing its own currency along with a central bank. This deharmonized customs duties between the member states. The result of this economic nationalism was a decline in intra-East Africa trade levels, imbalances in inter-state remittance, and loss of foreign private investment over perceptions/concerns about economic instability.<sup>19</sup>

Apart from the political and economic factors, institutional shortcomings played a major role in the collapse of the Community. East African Ministerial Committees and

Councils were at the center of these shortcomings. Meetings took too long to reach decisions. Many other decisions were ignored or otherwise left unimplemented. As a result, individual member states found themselves intervening directly in the daily operations of what was intended to be an autonomous institution with a distinct legal personality.

Another important factor was the ideological differences between partner states. Kenya was developing a free market economy and much of its resources went toward capital improvements. Tanzania, on the other hand, was developing a planned socialist economy since independence and much of its resources were directed toward welfare programs. Each country, respectively, felt it was bearing an unfair economic burden within the Community, a feeling that other members were not contributing enough to regional development than what one did. The problems between Tanzania and Kenya were exacerbated by Uganda's nationalization of the commercial assets of Ugandans of Asian origin.

The demise of the 10-year old organization culminated in June 1977 when the partner states withheld approval for the general fund services budget for the year beginning July 1, 1977.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the EAC collapsed due to political and ideological differences, perceived and real inequalities in the benefits each state was getting from the Community and weakness of the foundation on which the Community was built. That marked the end of the long-term envisioned goal and purpose of establishing a common market to promote, strengthen, and regulate sustainable common commercial and industrial developments.

## The New East African Community

The new East African Community was born in 2001 and the treaty for its establishment was signed in November 1999. The founding members of the new EAC are Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Burundi and Rwanda joined the Community in 2003. With the acceptance of its newest members, Rwanda and Burundi, the bloc's population increased from 90 million to around 115 million people.<sup>21</sup> The principal purpose of the establishment of EAC is to strengthen regional co-operation and development through economic, cultural and political integration of the partner states.

The foundation for the revival of the EAC came from the Mediation Agreement of 1984.<sup>22</sup> The agreement was aimed at the division of assets and liabilities of the defunct EAC. The agreement was the result of seven years of intense negotiations on how assets and liabilities were to be divided between the former partner states. In the Mediation Agreement there is a provision stating: "The States agree to explore and identify further areas for future co-operation and to work out concrete arrangements for such co-operation."<sup>23</sup> Whether it was the ingeniousness of the mediator for inserting the provision, or the willingness of the presidents of each of the member states, to revisit integration, is debatable for the political relationships that existed between former partner states at that time were still marred by mistrust. The signing of the 1999 Treaty was preceded by a series of consultative meetings between the heads of state of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.

The EAC has eight objectives which are as follows: (1) improve the standard of living and quality of life of the people of East Africa; (2) ensure balanced, orderly, consistent and fair development in East Africa; (3) ensure reasonable and proper use of natural resources taking into account safety and sustainability of the environment; (4)

promote the active participation and benefit of the people in development; (5) enable the business community and the general public to play a leading role; (6) strengthen and improve the role of women in development; (7) promote peace, security and stability in East Africa, and (8) promote other initiatives aimed at a successful community<sup>24</sup>.

The EAC Treaty has been viewed as unique in Africa and perhaps in the world because its objectives are premised on the development of policies and programs specifically aimed at widening and deepening cooperation among the three (now five) partner states in the political, economic, social and cultural fields.<sup>25</sup> More importantly, membership to the Community is conditional. The partner States undertake to abide by the principles of good governance, including adherence to the principles of democracy, the rule of law, social justice and the maintenance of universally accepted standards of human rights.<sup>26</sup> Membership is based on adhering to these standards.

The ultimate aim of the EAC is to establish a regional political integration which will be achieved through a gradual process involving the integration of major economic systems. These economic systems are a Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union and, eventually, Political Federation. The launching of each of these stages shall be regulated by a special treaty, a Protocol to be adopted at an unspecified time.<sup>27</sup> The protocol for establishing the Customs Union was signed by the heads of states in March 2004 and came into force on January 1, 2005. The establishment of a Common Market will ensure the free movement of labor, goods, services, capital and the right to establishment and residence at a time to be determined by the Council.

The EAC is organized into the Summit of Heads of State and Government<sup>28</sup>; the Council of Ministers<sup>29</sup>; the Co-ordination Committee of Permanent Secretaries<sup>30</sup>; the

East African Court of Justice<sup>31</sup>; the East African Legislative Assembly<sup>32</sup>; and the Secretariat<sup>33</sup>. Each of these organs has distinct functions. The Summit of Heads of State and Government is responsible for giving general direction and impetus to the attainment of the Community objectives. The Council of Ministers consists of ministers responsible for regional co-operation of each member state and such other Ministers of the member states. The Council is the policy organ of the Community; it promotes monitors and keeps under regular review the implementation of the programs of the Community and ensures the proper functioning of the regional organization.

The Secretariat is the executive organ of the EAC. It is headed by the Secretary General (on rotational basis). S/he is assisted by two deputies including the Offices of the Counsel to the Community. The co-ordination committee consists of the Permanent Secretaries responsible for regional co-operation in each member state. The committee is responsible to the Council of Ministers and it also coordinates activities carried out by the Sectoral Committees. The Committees are responsible for preparation of comprehensive implementation programs, priority setting of various sectors and implementation monitoring. While the East African Court of Justice is charged with the interpretation and application of the Treaty on Common Market issues, the East African Legislative Assembly is the legislative organ of the Community. One of the functions of the Legislative Assembly is to debate and approve the budget of the Community. Among its members are the three Ministers responsible for regional co-operation, the Secretary General and the Counsel to the EAC.

#### The Political Federation

It has already been indicated how the members of the EAC planned to move in a systematic way through Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union to Political

Federation through distinct but overlapping stages. Some notable developments have been reached as far as the Customs Union and the Common Market are concerned. However the most interesting and perhaps difficult stage is Political Federation. It is an interesting phase because it draws attention to a wide range of stakeholders in and outside of East Africa because it decides the fate of individual member countries, their people and the kind of political leadership that will constitute the Federation.

Understandably, federation in the context of the EAC, as it is for federal states, entails the surrendering of sovereignty of each of member state to a regional government that will be formed thereof. Traditionally, the federal government will take over defense, foreign policy, fiscal and monetary policy; have some legislative authority and final appellate court jurisdiction.<sup>34</sup> But in the case of the EAC political environment, this setting will hardly work given the disparity in political culture and practice among the five partner countries. Political instability in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda has been a result of deep rooted tribalism and access to resources, particularly land. This has a direct effect on the benefits of federation with regard to Tanzania.

Kenya has not experienced the worst political crisis since independence, but democracy was recently tested when tribal and ethnic violence followed the December 2007 presidential elections.<sup>35</sup> The politics of identity and citizenship in Kenya have to a large extent been characterized by ethnicity. Ethnic problems are not new in Kenya as Walter Oyugi indicates that ethnicity in Kenya became a national concern as early as the colonial period but was accentuated in the post-independence period during the implementation of the policy of Africanization.<sup>36</sup> Ethnic tensions developed especially around the structure of access to economic opportunities and redistribution of some of

the land formerly owned by the white settlers.<sup>37</sup> The reason for this state of affairs is that there has been no particular ethnic group which claims overall majority. In his study Oloo observes that, “the largest single group, the Kikuyu, account for about 20 per cent of the whole population. This has rendered politics in the country to be an act of balancing ethnic and geographical claims.”<sup>38</sup> Politics, in this context, takes the form of patronage for selected groups to the disadvantage of the whole.

These patronage politics have been at the center stage of Kenya’s political history. During the colonial period, the British introduced ethnically defined administrative units-‘tribe’-and as a result “ethnic groups became political tribes.”<sup>39</sup> With ethnicity seen as the key in determining the distribution of national resources, many ethnic politicians resort to political tribalism; which is the deliberate use and manipulation of ethnic identity in political competition with other groups.<sup>40</sup>

Political pluralism has not eliminated tribalism in Kenya, it has done the opposite. In the words of Mutua “...multiparty politics has nurtured tribalism, and the ethnic balkanization is here to stay unless someone offers an alternative vision for the country.”<sup>41</sup> However, ethnicity should not be taken as the only problem that defines problems in Kenyan politics. Poverty also plays a significant role in shaping Kenyan politics.

The December 2007 presidential elections shed some light on this political landscape. A study conducted by Smedt, in the Kibera area of Nairobi shows the importance and impact of ethnicity in Kenyan politics. When one of the presidential candidates was declared the winner, violence erupted among the residents of Kibera. Smedt writes, “People went on a rampage, destroying things. Kikuyu started moving out

immediately. People took to the streets, shouting Kikuyu have to go. People also started looting, especially Kikuyu houses and businesses. Violence had also erupted in other parts of Kenya, mainly in Rift Valley, where the Kalenjin community was destroying Kikuyu property, killing people, and chasing away Kikuyus from villages where they had lived for generations. Kikuyus took revenge and attacked Luos and Luhyas in Kikuyu-dominated areas like Limuru and Kawangware.”<sup>42</sup>

Uganda is vulnerable to this same pressure as Kenya. The Secretary General of the EAC recently expressed his concern over the proliferation of kingdoms and chiefdoms in Uganda and the concerted calls for ‘Majimboism’ (regionalism) in Kenya; conditions that do not augur well for a regional political federation.<sup>43</sup> Majimboism used in narrow sense entails ethnic purity and exclusivity with regard to access to resources and citizenship rights within ethnic territory; in extreme form this may lead to ethnic cleansing.

Uganda evolved through different paths from the time of its independence to the present. Like many other African nations, Uganda passed through monopoly politics to multiparty democracy. Uganda once embraced a “no party politics.” Instead “Movement” became an alternative system to political parties.<sup>44</sup> Thus activities of political parties were banned. The Movement was taken to be non-partisan, all-inclusive and broad-based type of political system. This was the characteristic of Ugandan politics from mid 1980s to late 2005. Multiparty democracy was officially restored in Uganda in 2005.

However, Ugandan politics seems to not have been largely dominated by tribalism. What is peculiar to Ugandan politics is the restoration of kingdoms. Whether the restoration of kingdoms is a sound political calculation or miscalculation will be



judged by the passage of time. But the obvious impact is devolution of power by central government and the potential enhancement of tribalism. So far signs of disloyalty to the central government are already being seen in Ugandan politics. For example, the Buganda kingdom is a force to reckon with because of its historical importance, geographical location, economic position, cultural identity, and its persistence. Such structures are likely to go beyond the government's ability to control. Recently the Land Bill caused anger in Buganda kingdom and it declared that it would not respect the legislation. At a news conference in Kampala, the Buganda Prime Minister said: "we are still opposed to land reforms and we shall continue our sensitization to the public about its negative content... even when it is passed, it will remain an idle piece of legislation."<sup>45</sup> The Buganda Kingdom now wants a system of federation in Uganda based on geographical (ethnic boundaries) areas of each individual kingdom. This is a challenge to the government.

How far will the government go to settle this challenge is not known, but what is likely to happen if the government was to intervene in Buganda affairs especially matters pertaining to land ownership is conflict. Previously, the media reported that the Buganda Kingdom denied the present leadership of Ugandan government access to the Kabaka (title given to the king of Buganda Kingdom) for almost two years. This shows how fragile the relationship between the central government and the kingdoms is. Politically, kingdoms might be divisive and detrimental to national unity and development because they are promoted along ethnic lines or groupings reflecting the pre- colonial Uganda. This is different from Tanzania which abolished chieftainship

(traditionally tribal based political establishment) immediately after independence and centralized political power in the national government.

Another problem facing Uganda is the ongoing war in the northern part of the country. The war has been going on for the last two decades. The government forces are fighting the rebel group Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kony, which seeks to remove the current government from power and establish a theocratic one based on the Christian Bible and the Ten Commandments. The war in northern Uganda has retarded democracy and development for the people of Uganda. It is also a challenge to peace, security and stability in Uganda and within the region.

Multiparty politics in Uganda is understandably in its initial stage of growth, unlike in Kenya and Tanzania where political pluralism began in the early 1990s. The state and its institutions seem to function in the Movement model type of democracy. However, this control of the state creates an uphill task for the opposition parties to contest for power, as shown by leaders in power's statement: "we are the ones who restored democracy in Uganda. Who else should win in this country?"<sup>46</sup> This implies that multiparty politics serves only to meet the technical constitutional purpose without representing a political commitment to the principles of democracy, which are a key to political stability. Tanzania should therefore correctly weigh the political conditions in the other member states prior to being part of the federation.

Burundi and Rwanda are the other members of the East African Community. The two countries have been in civil wars and conflict from the dawn of their independence. They are ethnically divided between Hutus and Tutsis as their major ethnic groups, and the Batwa minority. Statistically, Hutus are the majority of the three ethnic groups in

both countries; they are estimated at 80 percent of the population while Tutsis and Batwa make up 18 and 2 percent respectively.

Politically these countries are organized along tribal lines and this has been the major cause of ethnic conflict featuring Hutus and Tutsis from the early years of their independence. This ethnic division can be traced back to the period of external influences from 1880s.<sup>47</sup> Following the end civil war in Burundi and 1994 genocide in Rwanda, these countries have embarked on rebuilding their countries in all aspects of life from social cohesion to economic development. Both governments of Burundi and Rwanda are working hard to redress this perennial challenge.

Competition for resources, especially land, is one of the basic sources of political conflict for the two ethnic groups over the years. During the colonial period, Tutsis were placed well above the Hutus and Batwa; in the words of Gatwa “the Batutsi were chosen by the new rulers, colonialists and the missionaries to promote western civilization founded on Christianity. The other groups, the Bahutu and Batwa, constituted a mass of roturiers (commoners) relegated to the status of second-class citizens.

Discriminatory policies in education, evangelism, and the public sphere reinforced the supposed differences. An ethnic and then racist ideology emerged out of the meta-narrative.”<sup>48</sup> The meta-narrative is founded on the Hamitic myth which is a belief in racial superiority. The Tutsi were regarded as superior to the Hutu by the colonialists. The colonialists believed that the Tutsi were descendants of hamites (Caucasian race) assumed to be superior to Bantu. The colonialists introduced this ideology of racial division to organize and exploit the people of Rwanda. Prior to

independence, Hutus in Rwanda overthrew the ruling Tutsi king in 1959 and many Tutsis fled into exile in neighboring countries.<sup>49</sup> The Tutsis after many years in exile reorganized and launched attacks on Rwandan government led by Hutus in 1990. The four year civil war culminated in the genocide of almost 800,000 of Tutsis and moderate Hutus.<sup>50</sup> Currently, the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) government is in power and is largely led by Tutsis. Hence Rwanda is now transitioning to democracy.

How does Tanzania stand to benefit from the proposed political federation of East African countries given its different political culture, ethnicity, security, and economic system? Have the conditions of the 1967-1977 changed? No one denies the importance and benefits of federation or integration. However a meaningful political federation ought to bring together countries or societies which have many things in common, even the European countries, with a long history of cooperation, have not been able to federate as one state. They are a European Union with an emphasis on economic co-operation and development, common laws, and growing defense, security, and foreign policy coordination.

Tanzania is the fifth member in the EAC and is one of its founding members. It is the largest country in the region in terms of population and landmass. It is also the richest country in natural resources, with more arable land than of all the other four member states combined together. Other natural resources include minerals-gold, diamonds, tanzanite, coal, iron ores, nickels, natural gas, fertile agricultural and pasture land, forests and wildlife. In 2003, Tanzania became the continent's third-largest gold-producing country after South Africa and Ghana.<sup>51</sup> But generally, the economy is still

dominated by subsistence agriculture, providing employment to nearly 80 per cent of the population.

On the economic scale, Kenya is the largest economy of the region with a gross domestic product (GDP) estimated at \$ 30 billion which is higher than her regional partner states. Kenya dominates the manufacturing industry in the East African region. With the Common Market in place, Tanzania will be less competitive due to her poor industrial output. Tanzania is likely to become a mere market and source of raw materials for Kenyan industrial goods. Ultimately this may cripple Tanzania's nascent manufacturing sector. Tanzania's industrial sector is one of the smallest in Africa at less than 10 percent of the GDP.<sup>52</sup> It is far exceeded by Kenya and Uganda estimated at over 17% and 10% respectively. Given the issues within the other EAC members, prudence dictates Tanzania should not rush to join the federation of East African Countries.<sup>53</sup>

Politically, Tanzania has been relatively stable since independence when compared to the other countries in the region. Tanzania's mineral wealth has not subjected it to conflict as it has been the case in other parts of the continent. The reason is that since independence Tanzania has charted a unique sociopolitical and economic path. From the early days of its independence, Tanzania ensured that all Tanzanians benefitted equitably from the country's resources. This has been the ideology of Tanzania since independence; it is a democratic and socialist state which adheres to multiparty democracy (1992).<sup>54</sup> Socialism here should be understood to mean "brotherhood" or "togetherness" as opposed to Marxism. The leadership's vision of freedom, unity and socialism is an important contributing factor to the political stability of

Tanzania. This has created some tensions. Although socialism did help sustain social justice and stability; it also deterred foreign and local private investment and entrepreneurship.

It has also been argued that the East African Federation will promote political stability and eliminate tribalism in the region. Although this sounds relevant to countries with ethnicity problems, Tanzania does not suffer from these problems. Politics in Tanzania are not driven by tribe or ethnicity. This has been the case from the time of the struggle for independence to the present day and is partly due to good leadership, a common language (Kiswahili) and the absence of a dominant ethnic group with vested interests in maintaining control as is the case in the four partner states. Ethnicity has no place in Tanzanian politics. Political parties by law are forbidden from operating along tribal, religious, racial or places of origin lines. This is hardly the case in other countries in the region.

Kenya and Uganda are politically organized by ethnically based regions and kingdoms respectively. Therefore politics in these countries become ethnically driven and at times dependent on ethnic coalitions. This makes them vulnerable to unrest as people from different ethnic groups become victims of violence as witnessed in the past elections in Kenya. Tanzanian politics do not embrace ethnicity or ethnic coalitions. Tanzania has managed interethnic relations better than Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Politically Tanzania has been stable with a high degree of national identity despite being home to more than 120 ethnic groups. This diversity is the country's strength while in other countries in the region is one of the sources of conflict. Tanzania's political stability is likely to be tested in the federation. A study

conducted by Apuuli shows that most Tanzanians are afraid that their country risks being infected with ethnicity problems that characterize politics in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.<sup>55</sup> If the federation does happen, Tanzania's stable political culture is likely to be influenced by ethnicity problems that characterize its partner states.

Since the ethnicity problems characterizing Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda have not been caused by Tanzania, the solution to these problems lies within each country affected by ethnic conflict through dialogue, good governance and affirmative political actions in addressing them. The envisioned political federation cannot solve these problems because they are all perennial to those countries and whose solutions lie within each individual country. The possibility for Tanzania to fall into similar challenges affecting its neighbors is obvious because a federation will open borders together with ethnically driven and competitive politics.

The "Majimbo" regionalism and kingdoms politics go along with land ownership. Land is important in that it is a scarce resource, therefore people compete for ownership, and it is a source of wealth/ living. The so-called "outsiders" have been the victims of killings, destruction of their homes and property by those who claim to be the true inhabitants of the province, with the ultimate aim of evicting them from the outsiders or someone else's ancestral land. A case in point is in Kenya's Rift Valley Province whereby the Luo in Kericho were removed from an area they had settled for over sixty years.<sup>56</sup> Also ethnic clashes occurred in Mombasa in 1997 where it was alleged that the coastal people wanted to rid the area of non-coast people (Luo, Kikuyu, and Kamba).<sup>57</sup>

That being the case amongst Kenyans, it is a potential indication that Tanzanians will not find a place to settle in Kenya. What is likely is that Kenyans and others in the

region will rush to Tanzania and acquire land without problems because land distribution is not done along ethnic lines or interest groups. This is one of the reasons that partner states in the EAC push for a common market and federation so that the people of East Africa should have access to land and the right to citizenship in the member states. Tanzanians do not have the land problems that are the case in other countries in the region. Land is public property; it is vast and largely arable. Therefore, Federation could permit those evicted from their land due to ethnic violence in their respective countries to resettle in Tanzania. The consequences will be exhaustion of Tanzanian resources such as land and other natural resources.

Consequently, the labor market will favor non-Tanzanians (especially Kenyans and Ugandans) given their relatively high level of entrepreneurship skills and a large class of highly educated elite compared to many Tanzanians. Tanzanians have a competitive disadvantage compared to Ugandans and Kenyans. Kenya and Uganda were ahead of Tanzania in education even before their independence. Colonial Kenya and Uganda received greater amounts of social services investment including education infrastructure than Tanzania. Kenya and Uganda got universities before independence while Tanzania got its university after independence. Kenyans and Ugandans had greater opportunity to attend education in the United Kingdom than Tanzanians. Tanzania lags behind Kenya and Uganda in education and entrepreneurship due partly to colonial imbalances created by the British and lack of a private sector to augment government efforts in education sector. The general feeling among Tanzanians is that jobs which will be created by foreign investment capital will be taken especially by Kenyans and Ugandans due to their education advantages over Tanzanians.



Tanzania needs to have adequate skilled human resources and a national participation process in entrepreneurship like in Kenya and Uganda to be able to benefit from the federation. Any investment will require labor and it will be a highly competitive market. The likelihood is that many Tanzanians will have less qualification than those from partner states. Therefore, the influx of foreign labor is likely to cause public anger, a phenomenon common in many parts of the world. A good example is when “the United Kingdom and Ireland liberalized their labor markets, high flows were registered and there had been some negative public reaction.”<sup>58</sup> Similarly, in South Africa migrant workers are being attacked. Foreign labor may provide some benefits but in the long run and if not controlled it is resource intensive and politically sensitive. It is sensitive because it can increase nationalistic tensions (possibly regional conflict on the basis of nationality), bringing instability in the recipient nation.

Moreover, business people have expressed their concern over the flood of foreign goods (in particular from Kenya) in the Tanzanian market while Tanzanian goods are denied entry into Kenyan market.<sup>59</sup> Countries still promote their economic interests to the detriment of federation. Tanzania milk processors provide a good example of excessive restrictions imposed by Kenya authorities on milk exports. The Musoma Dairy limited is a Tanzanian milk processor. The Musoma Dairy Limited complained that its exports had been denied entry into Kenya by the Kenya Revenue Authority on the grounds that it failed the required qualifications of customs rules.<sup>60</sup> The rules affecting the Musoma Dairy are meant to promote indigenous industries by restricting exports from outside manufacturers.

The denial of Tanzania's products into Kenya market is protectionism. This shows how Kenya is keen on protecting its vibrant industries and market against foreign goods. However, it sends a clear signal to other member states that national interests cannot be reconciled. It further shows that a federation is not a community of common interests; countries with larger economies want to have easy access to resources and markets for their industrial goods through a political federation. Tanzania being the least developed industrially, its efforts to carry out industrial development will be slowed down significantly with the flooding of its market with industrial goods from her regional partners. Tanzania needs to take necessary steps to protect her productive resources and internal market to avoid a repeat of her historically disadvantaged position in the colonial East Africa and push for a more even application of the Customs Union/Common Market rules.

Another problem that will disadvantage Tanzania is the nature of political and constitutional agendas each member state pursues. Harmonization of these agendas seems to be hard. A federation cannot be realized where one member (Uganda) of the constituents has no presidential term limits for the president while others have term limits.

Additionally, while the East African countries strive for political federation, Kenya and Uganda have a disputed border. The disputed area is Mbingo Island in Lake Victoria. Each country claims ownership of the tiny island with rich fisheries resources. Statements from Kampala in 2009 sparked some diplomatic row between the two neighboring countries. Angry Kenyans protested by uprooting the railway which runs from Mombasa in Kenya to Uganda. The railway is important because it is the only link

from the Coast (Mombasa harbor) to Uganda and carries the bulk of Uganda's imports and exports. The island's ownership is still undetermined because a joint demarcation committee could not reach a conclusion.<sup>61</sup> So far the other three member states have not shown any effort to resolve the dispute through the EAC heads of state summit. The federation will not solve this problem because it is an issue of jurisdiction and resourced based. All this is an indication that conditions for political federation are not ripe, and that the diplomatic row may escalate into serious conflict. Political federation is likely to bring more conflict and instability in the region, and Tanzania may have to pay the price as happened between Mali and Senegal, the former Soviet Union republics, and Yugoslavia.

### Conclusion

Cooperation between states is not a new phenomenon in or outside of the African continent. East African regional cooperation began in the 1920s to promote the economic well-being of the people. The proposed political federation of East African countries was, and still remains, another attempt to address the problems facing the region: poverty, security and economic wellbeing. Tanzania is one of the partner states in the revived EAC. However the present political and economic structures in the region suggest that Tanzania will have little to gain in the federation because of its weak and less competitive economy, and political instability in the other states. Moreover, ideologically these countries have significant differences which were one of the causes for the collapse of the first East African Community in 1977. For Tanzania to have a future in the federation it must develop the capacity, both human and physical to compete with the dominant economy in the region, Kenya and Uganda.

Pan-Africanism is not a reason for integration, Tanzania must not fall trap of the spirit of Pan-Africanism, and it must clearly define its interests in the federation.

Tanzania should advocate regional economic co-operation, security co-operation, infrastructure development especially roads and railways for fast movement of goods and services in the region and other challenges related to environment without necessarily a political federation. This is what is taking place in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

Stability cannot be attained in a premature federation as some staunch supporters seem to suggest, it must be attained through democratization, political will and the equitable distribution of national resources. The current political realignment in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda does not give space to Tanzania to gain from the federation. Surprisingly, many people in Kenya and Uganda seem to rush to a regional political federation while many Tanzanians see the rationale for EAC as unclear and its benefits uncertain. If a federation is to occur, the process should be gradual. While Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda work on improving social justice and diminishing the ethnic element of politics, Tanzania should work on economic competitiveness. Those who strongly insist on a political federation want to do what Ann Seidman and Frederick Anang call “tomorrow is built today.”<sup>62</sup> For Tanzania it implies that her tomorrow is destroyed today if it joins in the federation. Anything that Tanzania will gain from the federation is very little compared to what the rest of the region will get from Tanzania

## Endnotes

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<sup>4</sup> Kamanga, Ibid., 4.

<sup>5</sup> Nye, Ibid., 175.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Nye, Ibid., 3.

<sup>8</sup> Speech to the United Nations by Kenya's Minister of Home Affairs and subsequently Vice President Oginga Odinga, quoted in Reporter (Nairobi) December 21, 1963.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 175.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 196-197.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.,203.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.,204.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.,209.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>15</sup> Katembo, Ibid., 109.

<sup>16</sup> Kamanga, Ibid., 10.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>18</sup> Katembo, Ibid., 110.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.,110.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Article 7 ( 2 ).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., Article 10-12.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., Article 13-16.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Article 17-19.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., Article 23-47.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Article 48-65.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Article 66-73.

<sup>34</sup> The Constitution of the United States is referenced as an example/ model.

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<sup>43</sup> The Citizen Newspaper, Dar es Salaam, November 28, 2009.

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